



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

201 W. Preston Street • Baltimore, Maryland 21201

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

July 29, 2011

Subject: Behavioral Health Integration

As I look back at the efforts to integrate behavioral health systems and services, there are two significant milestones during my tenure that have moved us toward action:

During the 2007 Legislative session, the Maryland General Assembly created the position of the Deputy for Behavioral Health and Disabilities, signaling a desired change in how the State conceptualized the leadership in the development of services for individuals with co-occurring disorders. Specifically, the charge was to “develop an integrated system for planning, policy, and services within the three administrations to coordinate programming for populations with co-occurring disorders”.

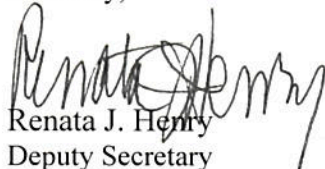
Three years later, the Maryland Health Reform Coordinating Council’s Recommendation for DHMH to “study different strategies to achieve the integration of mental health, substance abuse and somatic services, including statewide structure and policy, financing that encourages coordination of care and delivery system changes to improve coordination”.

Today, I am looking forward to working with all stakeholders to achieve positive change in the behavioral health system. We have full commitment to an open communication process that distributes information, solicits input; builds consensus; and creates a shared vision and principles.

This work requires that we develop an infrastructure for systems integration that will support practitioners in delivering integrated interventions, treatment and supports. To achieve the infrastructure change we will review and revise state regulations as necessary. Reorganize management information systems. Make changes in financing; and promote best practices across the state. We will accomplish these tasks together.

The work ahead of us will be challenging, but the outcome will be our reward.

Sincerely,



Renata J. Henry
Deputy Secretary